

I. IN THE SPECIFICATION:

A. Please enter the following amended replacement paragraph.

1. On page 9, line 15 to page 10, line 7:

Located at the bottom of the cylindrical inner housing 110 is a raised ring 120. The raised ring 120 is formed to the bottom of the cylindrical inner housing 110 as by, for example, plastic molding during the manufacturing stage much like that described for the anti-drip collar 116. The raised ring 120 is designed to function as a stop at the bottom of the cylindrical inner housing 110 when the raised ring 120 reaches the top lid 106 of the paint container 102 during insertion of the pouring spout 100 as shown in Fig. 10. The raised ring 120 also cooperates with the construction of the outer safety sleeve 114 to stop the downward motion thereof to prevent the safety sleeve 114 from sliding off of the cylindrical inner housing 110 as is shown in Fig. 9. These features will be described in more detail once the full construction of the outer safety sleeve 114 is disclosed herein below. Formed on the outer surface of the cylindrical inner housing 110 and extending between the anti-drip collar 116 and the raised ring 120 is a plurality of guide ribs 122. The guide ribs 122 are intended to cooperate with the construction of the outer safety sleeve 114 for keeping the outer safety sleeve 114 aligned with the cylindrical inner housing 110. Further, the plurality of guide ribs 122 serve to provide an interference fit, i.e., a cohesive frictional attachment, between the outer safety sleeve 114 and the cylindrical inner housing 110. The guide ribs 122 can be formed onto the exterior surface of the cylindrical inner housing 110 as by molding in plastic. Each of the plurality of guide ribs 122 extends outward from the exterior surface of the cylindrical inner housing 110 at a distance equal to the distance that the raised ring 120 extends outward from the cylindrical inner housing 110. Although the number of guide ribs 122 can be varied, it is anticipated that the preferred embodiment should include three guide ribs 122 located every one-hundred-twenty mechanical degrees about the circumference of the cylindrical inner housing 110 as is indicated in Fig. 8.

2. On page 10, line 17 to page 11, line 4:

The pair of opposing punch blades 124 are attached to the cylindrical inner housing 110 in the following manner. In the preferred embodiment, the single piece of stainless steel sheet metal shown in ~~Fig. 11~~ Fig. 11 that is utilized to fashion the punch blades 124 also includes a plurality of rectangular penetrations 128 formed therein. The construction of the interior of the cylindrical inner housing 110 is designed to accommodate the attachment of and provide support to the punch blades 124. Formed on the lower interior surface 130 of the cylindrical inner housing 110 is a plurality of rectangular projections 132 as shown in Figs. 9 and 10. The rectangular projections 132 can be formed as by plastic molding during the manufacturing stage. The plurality of rectangular penetrations 128 formed in the punch blades 124 shown in Fig. 11 correspond in number and position to the plurality of rectangular projections 132 shown in Figs. 9 and 10. In addition, the lower interior surface 130 of the cylindrical inner housing 110 is fashioned as by plastic molding to include an annular shoulder or shelf 134 also shown in Figs. 9 and 10. The annular shoulder 134 is employed to provide support to the punch blades 124 particularly during insertion of the punch blades 124 into the top lid 106 of the paint container 102. Thus, the annular shoulder 134 is intended to prevent vertical movement of the punch blades 124 inside of the cylindrical inner housing 110 during use of the pouring spout 100 by providing a bearing surface for the punch blades 124 to reduce the mechanical shear load on the cylindrical inner housing 110.

3. On page 12, lines 1-20:

Each of the pair of opposing stainless steel punch blades 124 includes a projection spur 136 formed ~~thereon~~ on the surface of the punch blade 124 as is clearly shown in Figs. 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Each projection spur 136 functions in combination with the punch blades 124 to provide a pair of D-shaped or half-moon shaped openings 138 in the top lid 106 of the paint container 102 as shown in Figs. 12 and 14. Each of the projection spurs 136 is formed by piercing each of the respective punch blades 124 with a piercing tool (not shown) as is known in the art. Thus, each projection spur 136 is a stainless steel fragment extending from the corresponding stainless steel punch blade 124 as is best shown in the cross-sectional views of Figs. 9 and 10. During insertion of the pair of punch blades 124

of the pouring spout 100 into the top lid 106 of the paint container 102, a pair of semi-circular cuts or slices 140 are formed as shown in Fig. 14. A portion of the metal comprising the top lid 106, i.e., a center strip or bridge 142, exists between the pair of semi-circular cuts 140 as is best shown in Fig. 14. The center strip 142 is not cut or sliced by the punch blades 124. As the punch blades 124 travel down through the top lid 106 and form the semi-circular cuts 140 therein, each corresponding projection spur 136 physically contacts and forces downward a D-shaped or half-moon shaped flap 144 located between each semi-circular cut 140 and the center strip 142. This action forms the D-shaped or half-moon shaped openings 138 in the lid 106 which function as dispensing ports for the paint 104 contained with within the paint container 102.

4. On page 15, line 15 to page 16, line 3:

With continued reference to the top ring 170 of the safety sleeve 114 shown in Fig. 8, the diameter of the top ring 170 at the interior facing ledge 174 is smaller than the diameter of safety sleeve 114. A dotted line 178 located between the outer boundary of the top ring 170 and the interior facing ledge 174 represents the inner wall of the outer sleeve 114. Thus, the differential distance between the dotted line 178 and the inner edge of the interior facing ledge 174 represents the horizontal dimension of the interior facing ledge 174, i.e., the differential distance describes how far the interior facing ledge 174 extends inward and beyond the inner wall of the outer sleeve 114. Note that the diameter of the top ring 170 at the interior facing ledge 174 is sufficiently wide to pass over the exterior surface of the cylindrical inner housing 110. Simultaneously, the guide ribs 122 formed on the cylindrical inner housing 110 ~~rid~~ ride within the plurality of slots 176 formed within the top ring 170. Further note that the raised ring 120 is formed as by molding onto the bottom of the cylindrical inner housing 110 as is clearly shown in Fig. 8 and that the raised ring 120 extends outward from the cylindrical inner housing 110 by the same dimension as that of the guide ribs 122. Thus, when the safety sleeve 114 travels to the bottom of the cylindrical inner housing 110, the interior facing ledge 174 of the top ring 170 fails to pass over the raised ring 120. This feature prevents the outer safety sleeve 114 from separating from the cylindrical inner housing 110 at the bottom end of the

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cylindrical inner housing 110. Under these conditions, the safety sleeve 114 is in the lower position for shrouding the punch blades 124 as is shown in Figs. 4 and 6.

5. On page 16, line 27 to page 17, line 11:

During operation, the inventive pouring spout 100 is placed on the top lid 106 of the paint container 102 at the desired location for insertion. The stabilizer flange 172, which covers the punch blades 124, is positioned flat on the top lid 106. The cylindrical inner housing 110 extends above the stabilizer flange 172 as is shown in Fig. 1. The tethered removable cap 118 is then fitted onto the anti-drip collar 116 so that it can be utilized as a means for applying force to the punch blades 124 via the cylindrical inner housing 110. While steadying the pouring spout 100 with one hand (as by holding the body of the safety sleeve 114), a downward force is applied with the users free hand to the top of the removable cap 118. The downward force transmitted to the punch blades 124 through the cylindrical inner housing 110 causes the punch blades 124 to pierce the top lid 106 of the paint container 102. As the cylindrical inner housing 110 travels downward due to the applied force, the outer safety sleeve 114 effectively travels up the cylindrical inner housing 110 as the guide ribs 122 pass through the corresponding slots 176 formed in the top ring 170. The projection spurs 136 formed on the punch blades 124 ~~forcible~~ forcibly open the top surface 106 of the paint container 102 as shown in Figs. 10 and 14. The inserted pouring spout 100 is shown in Fig. 2.